at as early a point in his life as possible. The account will provide the individual with a unique IRA number that will stay with the individual through life. The individual would save and accumulate assets into this account in his working life, subject to a minimum of Rs. 100 per contribution and Rs. 500 in total accretions per year. Individuals would be free to decide the frequency of accretions into their accounts; there will be no pressure to make a fixed monthly contribution. The account would stay with the individual across job changes, spells of unemployment, and can be accessed at any location in India. The individual would always have access to an account balance statement showing his assets. All through, the individual would be empowered in having control of how his accumulated assets should be managed. Finally, upon retirement, the individual would be able to use his accumulated assets to buy annuities from annuity providers, and obtain a monthly income.

(iii) In this entire process, a sound regulatory framework is required to provide individuals an umbrella of safety. The OASIS Expert Committee has accordingly recommended that a new Authority be commissioned in order to perform a variety of important roles in the institutional arrangements of the old age income security sector.

Mass Suicide by Four Sisters in Bhilai

†4499. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that four real sisters had committed mass suicide in steel-making city Bhilai because their parents had performed inter-caste marriage and these four sisters were obsessed with social frustration due to not getting married and society not accepted them;

(b) whether there is any scheme regarding creating social awareness and promoting intercaste marriage so that this is socially recognized; and

(c) whether any grant is given to recognized organizations for the said work ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) It is a fact

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

that four sisters namely Kesharbai, Meenabai, Hemlatabai and Minakshibai committed suicide on 7-4-2000 at Kohaka Road, Bhilai, Distt. Durg, Madhya Pradesh. Although the parents had contracted *inter-caste* marriage, it is not true that they committed suicide on account of their parents having done so and that they were obsessed with social frustration.

(b) and (c) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1995 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Central assistance is released to the State Governments (50 : 50) and Union Territory Administrations (100%) to support measure undertaken by them which inter alia include incentive to inter -caste married couples. During 1999-2000, Central Assistance amounting to Rs. 732.96 lakhs released to Government of Madhya Pradesh included assistance for various measures, such as Incentive to *Inter-Caste* Married couples, Gram Panchayat Award for eradicating untouchability, Sadbhawana Camp and Publicity for removing untouchability.

Non-Availability of Hindi Typewriters

†4500. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the names of the offices under her Ministry which don't have a single Hindi typewriter, so far;

(b) the reasons for not purchasing the Hindi typewriter there, so far; and

(c) the action taken to ensure the compliance of targets fixed for the purchase of Hindi typewriters by the Department of Official Language in its annual Hindi programme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) All the offices under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment have Hindi typewriters.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Ministry has stopped purchasing both manual and electronic typewriters. Instead computers are being purchased. All efforts are being made to provide hindi software in all the computers.

---

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.